

# State of Kansas

## Employee Award and Recognition

### Program Guidelines

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Effective September 15, 2002  
Revised May 1, 2003

#### Purpose

The program provides an employee award and recognition system authorized by K.S.A. 75-37, 105. The program is designed to recognize an employee's contribution to the objectives of the agency and state government through excellence in performance and service.

#### Award Categories

Agencies may select from the following award categories when establishing an award and recognition program depending on the agency mission, goals, and resources.

- Distinguished Accomplishment: A notable event or achievement that is significant in scope, effort, or impact on government operations or service to citizens.
- Meritorious Service: Execution of the duties of the position far beyond the service level commonly expected by the employees' customers that is of great benefit to, or reflects highly on, the agency or the state.
- Innovation: Significant process improvement or removal of barriers that prevent improvement of products or services.  
(Note): For information on Innovation Awards in conjunction with the Employee Suggestion Program see the **Employee Suggestion Program Guidelines**.
- Kansas Quality Management: Exemplary use of the principles, practices, and tools of Kansas Quality Management.
- Volunteerism: Outstanding levels of service outside the normal work hours to a non-profit organization dedicated to service, charitable, humanitarian, or philanthropic causes.
- Length of Service: Recognition of notable anniversaries in service to the State of Kansas, which include at least 10, 20, 30 or 40-year anniversaries. Agencies may order service pins using the state contract or may use other forms of recognition. The Division of Personnel Services (DPS) will coordinate award presentations for 40 years of service.

These optional award categories indicate achievement well beyond the norm. In general, the minimum required level of achievement should not be so high as to be unattainable by employees who are generally recognized as performing in an outstanding manner, nor so low that the awards lose significance by being easily attainable.

## **Eligibility**

- Employees may be nominated for awards individually or as part of a group or team under each category.
- All regular, classified and unclassified employees, and employees in unclassified temporary benefits eligible positions may be nominated.
- Probationary employees may be nominated only if they are nominated as part of a group.

## **Award Types**

Agencies can provide monetary and nonmonetary awards to employees. The total gross value of all monetary and nonmonetary awards to a single employee under this program during a fiscal year must not exceed \$3,500. The amount paid under the Employee Suggestion Program does not count against the \$3,500 limit for other awards available through the Awards & Recognition Program.

The award can be paid from Kansas Savings Incentive Program (KSIP) funds.

Monetary awards are cash awards and may be given for all award categories, except the volunteerism category.

All monetary awards must meet the conditions for a discretionary bonus set out in 29 C.F.R. 778.211, except for the Innovation Award under the Employee Suggestion Program, which is nondiscretionary. The monetary award must meet each of the following conditions in order to qualify as a discretionary bonus:

- The agency head retains total discretion both as to the fact of an award and as to the amount and nature of any award;
- The amount or nature of an award, if any, is determined by the agency head without prior promise or agreement;
- The employee has no contract right, express or implied, to any award; and
- The award is not paid pursuant to any prior contract, agreement, or promise.

In effect, discretionary awards are not anticipated or expected by an employee. For example, if an employee, knows that an award will be given if he or she does “x, y, and z”, the award becomes nondiscretionary. This type of award is not allowed under the Employee Award and Recognition Program.

Nonmonetary awards include awards such as gift certificates, plaques, certificates of achievement, trophies, cups, mugs, shirts, sweatshirts, caps, and miscellaneous items such as tools, electronics, radios, etc. Nonmonetary awards can be used to recognize employees for all award categories.

## **Agency Guidelines**

Agencies may develop and implement an award and recognition program that is tailored to enhance the agency’s mission, goals, and objectives. Agencies that decide to implement a program must develop guidelines and may be subject to review by DPS.

Guidelines must include the following:

- A statement of the agency's mission and objectives;
- A statement of the purpose of the agency's employee award and recognition program;
- A statement of the award categories to be recognized, including general criteria for awards in each category;
- A statement as to whether regular classified employees, unclassified employees, and unclassified temporary employees in benefits eligible positions, may be nominated; whether teams may be nominated; and whether employees will be limited on the number of awards they can receive in a fiscal year;
- For each award category, a statement as to whether monetary awards, nonmonetary awards, or both, may be awarded;
- A description of the nomination process; and
- A description of the selection process, which must include provisions to safeguard against opportunities for abuse and to ensure objective decision-making procedures.

### **Recommended Nomination and Selection Process**

In order to ensure a fair and objective award and recognition program, agencies should establish a detailed nomination and selection process. Agencies should also select a program coordinator to be the point of contact for their award and recognition program.

The following is the recommended nomination process:

- 1) Complete the nomination form and attach supporting documentation (a sample nomination form is attached).
- 2) Forward the nomination form to the agency program coordinator.
- 3) The nomination will be reviewed for completeness by the coordinator. Incomplete nomination forms will be returned to the nominator for complete information.
- 4) Nominations will then be forwarded to the selection committee for review.

Agencies should appoint a selection committee to review nominations and determine the nominees to recognize. The selection process must include provisions to safeguard against opportunities for abuse and to ensure objective decision-making procedures in agency award programs.

### **Reporting**

At the end of each fiscal year, agencies must provide a report to the Division of Personnel Services (DPS) identifying each nonmonetary award given. The report must at least include the following: recipient name, value of the award, the award category and the date awarded. In addition, at the end of each fiscal year, DPS will produce reports on monetary awards given.

### **Contact Information**

For questions related to the program guidelines, contact Kraig Knowlton in the Division of Personnel Services at (785) 296-1082 or by email at [kraig.knowlton@da.state.ks.us](mailto:kraig.knowlton@da.state.ks.us).